

# Family Handbook



**CAMP HOWE**  
*A camp for all youth!*

[www.camphowe.com](http://www.camphowe.com)

PO Box 326  
Goshen, MA 01032  
413-268-7635

# Welcome to Camp Howe

We're so excited that you've chosen Camp Howe for your child's summer adventure! Tucked away in the beautiful town of Goshen, MA, Camp Howe isn't just another summer camp—it's a place where kids have fun, can make lifelong friends, and grow in amazing ways. As you drive up our dirt road, you'll feel the magic of a community where everyone is welcomed and valued.

What makes Camp Howe so special? It's our commitment to creating an inclusive, accepting space where every camper can be themselves. Whether they're kicking a soccer ball, trying out a new swim stroke, or creating a masterpiece in arts and crafts, kids build confidence and discover their unique strengths. Along the way, they also learn to appreciate and connect with others in meaningful ways—and have a blast doing it!

Our camp's biggest strength is its community. We've built a place where differences are celebrated, and everyone can belong. This is where kids can safely explore who they are, break out of their comfort zones, and grow in ways that last a lifetime. The lessons learned here go far beyond the summer, helping campers approach the world with kindness, understanding, and an open heart.

To help your camper get the most out of their time at Camp Howe, a little preparation goes a long way. This handbook is here to give you all the info you'll need to get ready for an awesome summer. We also encourage you to chat with your camper about what they're looking forward to and any goal they have—it's a great way to get them even more excited!

If you have any questions or just want to check in, don't hesitate to reach out. We're here for you and your family every step of the way. You can contact the Director or Executive Director anytime during the summer at (413) 268-7635.

We can't wait to welcome your camper to the Camp Howe family! Let's make this summer unforgettable.

Warm regards,

Nora- Camp Director

Terrie Campbell, Executive Director



# Contents

Welcome for Director and Executive Director .....	2
Mission and Values .....	4
Four Pillars of the Camp Howe Program .....	5
Impartant Dates .....	6
Registrations and Payment Information .....	7
Camp Life .....	8
Homesickness Prevention .....	14
Check In .....	18
Check Out .....	20
Communication .....	21
All things Health and Medical .....	23
Packing .....	27
Day Camp Specific Information .....	30
Sample Schedules .....	31
Code of Conduct .....	33
Directions .....	35
Accrediation and Licence .....	36

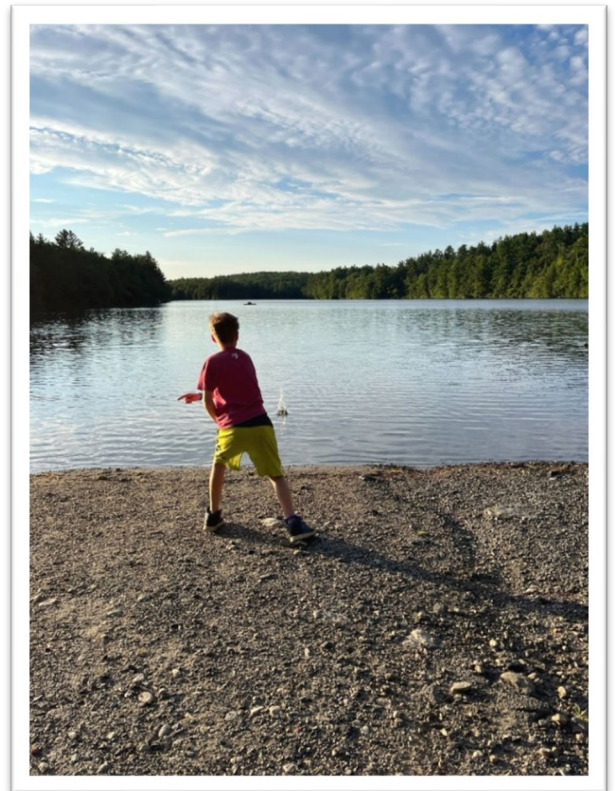
## Mission and Values

The mission of Camp Howe is to offer high-quality, accredited, educational and recreational camping program and facilities to all youth and adults in a formative experience which helps to prepare them with basic life-skills involving team work, leadership, decision making, resource management, self-awareness, coping, communicating and relating to others. Our organizational goals are to create supportive environments for culturally diverse youth and adults to reach their fullest potential by:

- Creating a safe, enjoyable outdoor learning experience,
- Providing an opportunity to develop leadership skills social and group living while fostering creativity, independence and responsibility,
- Offering a choice of age appropriate programs that build confidence and self-esteem,
- Encouraging an understanding and respect for the environment, animals, agriculture, and natural resources,
- Building an appreciation and acceptance of the differences in people, and developing a caring community.

To achieve this, Camp Howe provides age appropriate recreational activities to assist youth in gaining valuable life skills such as

- Accepts differences in others
- Adapts to change
- Develop new skills
- Does better with group living skills
- Has greater appreciate for the outdoors
- Has increased self-esteem
- Has more willingness to try new things
- Is more confident
- Is more responsible and helpful
- More independent
- Skills to take care of self
- Takes care of his/her own things
- Takes leadership role



## Four Pillars of Camp



**Acceptance and Inclusion** – Camp Howe welcomes youth of all backgrounds to embrace the joy of camp life. We foster understanding and appreciation for everyone’s unique qualities through activities and shared experiences. Our inclusive culture celebrates differences, helping campers accept themselves and others. Here, every child feels valued for who they are, building confidence and respect that extends beyond camp.



**Personal Growth** – Every Camp Howe program is designed for personal growth. While learning activities like archery or climbing, campers develop life skills like confidence, responsibility, and leadership. Immersed in nature and group settings, they gain adaptability and self-esteem. Our supportive environment nurtures resilience, empathy, and independence, helping campers thrive in life beyond camp.



**Fun – The Power of Play** – At Camp Howe, fun is at the heart of learning. We embrace spontaneity, creativity, and silliness, allowing children to enjoy the magic of play. Laughter and games help campers relieve stress, make friends, and build creativity. In this joyful environment, values like teamwork and resilience naturally emerge, leaving kids with cherished memories and lifelong skills.



**Safe** – Safety is our top priority at Camp Howe. We are licensed and fully compliant with all regulations from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and our Local Board of Health. We also pursue American Camp Association (ACA) accreditation, meeting nearly 300 rigorous standards yearly. These cover critical areas like health, aquatics, transportation, and facility management, ensuring a secure and enriching environment for campers and staff. Families can trust that their children’s safety and well-being are thoughtfully prioritized.

## Important Dates

- May 6<sup>th</sup> – Family Zoom Gathering
- May 15<sup>th</sup> - Last day to withdraw without owing full tuition
- May TBD – Camp Clean up day!
- June 1<sup>st</sup> – Full Payment Due and Complete Paperwork in Campdocs
- June 20<sup>th</sup> (1 to 3pm) – Open House

## Session Dates

- Session 1: June 21–June 26
- Session 2: June 28–July 3
- Session B: July 5–July 17 (Day Camp 3 and 4)
- Session 5: July 19–July 24
- Session 6: July 26–July 31
- Session D: August 2–August 14 (Day Camp 7 and 8)



# Registration and Payment

## Payment Deadlines

Payment of camp fees must be received June 1<sup>st</sup>. Any additional payments made on opening day must be made with a credit card or cash; personal checks will not be accepted. Checks sent in prior to June should be made payable to Camp Howe, Inc., P.O. Box 326, Goshen, MA 01032.

## Refund Policy

Reserving a space for a youth child at Camp Howe, you must pay a non-refundable fee of \$100.00 per week. Reserving a space prevents other youth from enrolling if the session is full. Because we hire staff, organize program enrollment, and purchase equipment and supplies based on our anticipated enrollment, the tuition is non-refundable after May 15. If there is an outstanding balance, the remaining balance will be due.

Tuition, minus the deposit, may be refunded with a signed doctor's note and an explanation of the medical reason addressed to the Executive Director. Cancellations must be received in writing at the Camp Office. Insurance, that can offset the expense, is available through Campdocs at the time of registration.

In the case of dismissal, homesickness, or voluntary withdrawal, fees are not refunded. Any form of physical violence will result in immediate dismissal.

## Session Changes

If you need to change your child's session, we will accommodate the change if space is available and the original session has not yet begun. Please contact us as soon as possible to discuss the change.

## Tax Information

Camp fees may be tax-deductible for some families. Our Taxpayer Identification Number is 04-2258213.

Please keep this number with your tax information. Your camper confirmation form includes this number and can be used as a receipt of your payment. If you need an additional receipt, please call or email the office.



# Camp Life

## The Environment

We live in simple wooden cabins that keep us closely connected to nature. Camp Howe is surrounded by the DAR State Park. The area is home to small animals and a variety of insects, including bees, flies, and mosquitoes. While these creatures are generally harmless, they can be a bit of a nuisance, and it may take some time to get used to them. We recommend sending your child with bug spray to help keep mosquitoes and other insects at bay. The terrain can also be rocky in some places, especially along roads and paths, so we suggest packing sturdy footwear to ensure comfort and safety while exploring. The weather here is often unpredictable, with heavy rain, hot days, and cool evenings, so we recommend packing a variety of clothing to prepare for any conditions.

## Accommodation

Camp Howe's rustic cabins are built from wood and feature screens and doors for ventilation. Each cabin has a bunk capacity ranging from 12 to 18 beds. While the cabins are unheated, they are equipped with electricity, lights, bunks, and mattresses. We provide mattresses, but campers should bring their own bedding, ideally a sleeping bag and a sheet.

## Cabin Assignments

Cabin assignments are made using age, grade, program eligibility, and cabin mate requests. Campers and their families can select the cabin of their preference: female, male, or all-gender cabin. As we make these assignments, our goal is to create groups with a mix of campers, both new and returning, and provide campers with the opportunity to meet new friends from different geographic areas. We house our juniors and teens in different sides of camp. Campers of all genders share bathroom facilities in their unit but all have the choice to use single room stalls elsewhere in camp.

You can help us create a great experience for your camper by:

- Encouraging your child to welcome new campers into their cabin. If they've been to camp before, remind them to be friendly and supportive to help new campers feel at home.
- Reminding them that everyone has grown and changed since last summer—including them!
- Practicing how to approach new campers and make others feel included.

- Helping them learn strategies to manage disappointment, whether it's about their cabin assignment or other camp experiences.
- Talking through what it's like to share space with others and potential challenges they may face in a cabin environment.
- Letting them know that if they need anything, their counselors are there for them. Each cabin has two adult counselors that live with them.
- Informing them that in addition to their counselors, Camp Howe has Unit Directors and being a small camp, the Camp Director and Assistant Director are often out and about to connect with campers.
- Packing a few comfort items, like photos of family, a favorite book, or a small sentimental object to help them feel at home.

### A typical Day

Each day is thoughtfully structured to provide a balanced mix of activities, rest, and community engagement, ensuring a fulfilling experience for all campers. **No day is truly "typical"**—each day is full of new activities to keep campers engaged and excited, all within a structure that supports fun and growth.

### Mornings

- **Early Interest Groups (optional):** Swim, walk, stretch, music, or yoga-style movement.
- **Morning Flag (7:45 AM):** Community gathering with announcements, songs, and fun facts about a state or country.
- **Breakfast:** Outdoor meals (weather permitting); Day Campers arrive afterward.
- **CIA (Camp Improvement Acts):** Everyone pitches in to help take care of camp.
- **Five-Day Activity Block:** Campers choose one area (e.g., sports, arts, animals, aquatics, archery, ropes, hiking) to explore all week. Juniors rotate with their cabins; Teens choose independently.
- **Cabin/Group Activities:** Juniors do fun, age-appropriate activities like boating, archery, ropes, or special staff-led programs. Teens continue with choice-based blocks.
- **Lunch:** Shared community meal.
- **Camp Store:** Cabin visits throughout the week—shop souvenirs like towels, water bottles, or croc jibbitz.

### Afternoons

- **Siesta:** Cabin rest time—write letters, nap, read, or chat quietly.
- **Interest Groups:** One-day activities for all ages. Juniors with cabins; Teens select from various options.

- **Day Campers** depart before dinner.

### Evenings

- **Dinner:** Another camp-wide, outdoor-friendly meal.
- **Evening Flag:** More fun facts or cultural exploration of the day's featured place.
- **Evening Program:** Cabin bonding (first night) or all-camp fun like scavenger hunts, talent shows, mystery nights, or themed dances.

### Nighttime Routine

- **Juniors:** Wind down with cabin mates, bedtime prep, and **Cabin Chat**—a time to reflect, connect, and share.
- **Teens:** Enjoy a second, teen-only evening program before beginning their own cabin wind-down and **Cabin Chat**.
- **Nighttime Reflection** - After the evening program, juniors head to their cabins for quiet time and cabin chats, reflecting on their day and sharing experiences. Teens enjoy a second evening program tailored to their interests and developmental needs, followed by their own cabin time and chats. This routine ensures campers are well-rested and ready for another fun-filled day.
- **Lights Out:** Everyone gets much-needed sleep to recharge for the next big day!



### Laundry

Plan to bring enough clean clothes, towels, washcloths, and swimsuits for the entire session. Include a laundry bag for soiled items. Campers can rinse out some items and hang them on the line. Camp Howe does not provide laundry facilities for campers.

### Personal Hygiene

Maintaining personal hygiene at camp is essential for your child's well-being and comfort. Here's how you can help prepare them:

- **Showering and Swimming:** While campers won't shower daily, most will swim and rinse off each day. Discuss with your child how often they should shower and shampoo. Encourage them to wear their bathing suit only when swimming to promote good hygiene.
- **Menstrual Care:** If your child has started menstruating (or even if they haven't yet), please send the necessary supplies. Physical activity and changes in environment can sometimes trigger the first period. Ensure your child knows

what to expect and encourage them to talk to their counselor if they need assistance.

- **Bed-Wetting:** A new environment can sometimes lead to bed-wetting. Prepare your child for this possibility and encourage them to speak with their counselor if it occurs. If your child has a history of bed-wetting, please note it on the health form.

### **Exposure to the Sun, Dehydration and Insects.**

To protect against SUNBURN, sunscreen of SPF 25 or greater can be used. Application 10 minutes before going to an activity or to the lake with periodic reapplication would be most effective. Please show your camper how to use sunscreen lotion and send a supply with them especially for those un-tanned or very fair-skinned. Staff will endeavor to remind and assist them as necessary.

Liquid intake is critical to our body's health. Providing a marked water bottle with a shoulder-strap is an encouragement to your camper to remember to drink water regularly during the day. Counselors will remind the campers repetitively and lead them to drink, but children should be learning to be knowledgeable and responsible on their own.

Camp is in the great outdoors and we have plenty of mosquitoes, and while the West Nile virus has not been identified in the Goshen area, insect repellent or protective clothing are advised. Insect repellent is important. Please talk with your camper about its importance and application. NO pressurized brands, they will be taken from the campers. Consult your own doctor for their recommendation of the best non-aerosol insect repellent for your child. Long sleeves and pants-legs are a suggested alternative to repellents. Spending so much time outdoors there is a risk of campers getting a tick. Tell your camper to check over their own bodies for ticks at least once or twice a day. They should check their hair and areas where clothing is tight or in body folds. If they do find one, you should direct them to tell their counselor who will take them to the health supervisor to remove it.



## Screen-Free Living at Camp Howe

At Camp Howe, we believe in providing an authentic, unplugged experience where campers can step away from screens, build friendships, and engage in outdoor adventures without digital distractions. Technology can interfere with our goals of fostering socialization, independence, and a love of nature. Therefore, we do not allow campers to bring electronic devices, including cell phones or smartwatches with phone capabilities.

We understand that in today's world, being without a phone can feel like a big adjustment for both campers and parents. However, many campers report feeling less stressed and more present without screens, allowing them to form deeper connections with friends and counselors.

Sending a phone, even secretly, can create problems—it puts campers in a difficult position of hiding it from counselors and undermines the trust that makes camp a positive experience. If you're concerned about your child being without a phone, please reach out to us. We'd be happy to discuss strategies to help with the transition. If this feels like too much for you or your child, we recommend considering day camp or another program that will meet your needs.

Without screens, campers gain independence, strengthen friendships, and become more engaged in the present moment. As we like to say:

*"There's no reception in the woods, but you'll get a stronger connection!"*

### Photos

We do not hire a dedicated photographer or media specialist, as our staff's primary focus is working directly with campers to ensure they have the best possible experience. Additionally, we do not use expensive photo storage programs or facial recognition software for searching images. While we do take photos throughout the summer, we cannot guarantee that every camper will be photographed. We share a selection of these photos randomly on our social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, to provide families with a glimpse into the fun and activities at camp



## Camp Store

Campers can make purchases at the Camp Store on arrival and departure days, as well as during the week. The store offers postcards, stamps, toiletries, writing materials, t-shirts, and various camp souvenirs. To minimize the risk of loss, we ask that spending money be deposited into a store account upon arrival. **Candy will be limited to twice per week.** On closing day, any unused balances can either be withdrawn or donated. Donations and unclaimed balances will be transferred to our campership fund to help families with the cost of attending camp.

## Gratuities

We ask that families refrain from tipping individual staff members, as providing for all of our youth is the responsibility of the entire staff. Instead, families are encouraged to write a letter sharing their positive views of the staff and their child's experience. If you feel it is necessary to reward the staff, we encourage you to donate to the counselor appreciation fund or to our campership program.

## Pets

Although camp may seem like the perfect place for your furry friend to explore, we kindly ask that you leave your pets at home. This allows us to provide a safer camp for those with allergies or fears of animals. As part of our camp, we do have camp dogs. These dogs have been screened to ensure that they “good canine citizens”. Our farm animals are carefully selected to provide campers with the safest experience we can provide while handling these animals.



# Homesickness Prevention

Homesickness is normal when adjusting to camp. We understand that both campers and families may experience this, and we're here to support you through the transition. Every child is unique, and our approach is to reassure campers, encourage participation in activities, and help them focus on the fun aspects of camp. Our counselors provide close support during the first 24 hours, and leadership staff step in if extra help is needed. Most campers adjust within a couple of days. If difficulties continue, we may contact you by Tuesday lunchtime to discuss next steps. Please let your child know they won't be able to call home while at camp. If camp isn't a good fit for your child, we will work with you to make the best decision.

## How You Can Help Your Child Prepare for Camp

Getting ready for camp in advance can make a big difference. Here are some ways to help:

### 1. Talk About Camp

Explain what to expect, including living in a cabin, sharing responsibilities, camp activities, and daily routines. Address common worries, such as:

- What if I miss home?
- What if I don't make friends?
- What if I don't like the food?
- What if I feel sick?
- What if I wet the bed?

Encourage your child to share their concerns, and reassure them that counselors and staff are always there to help.

### 2. Involve Your Child in the Planning

Help your child feel in control by involving them in packing, choosing activities, and discussing their expectations for camp. If they feel they have a say in their camp experience, they're more likely to feel comfortable once they arrive.



### 3. Visit Camp Ahead of Time

If possible, attend our open house or schedule a visit before camp starts. Seeing the camp, meeting staff, and learning about activities can help ease worries and build excitement.

### 4. Practice Time Away from Home

If your child has never been away overnight, arrange sleepovers with friends or relatives to help them get used to being away from home in a supportive environment.

### 5. Limit Screen Time Before Camp

Reducing screen time in the week leading up to camp can make the transition smoother. Overuse of screens can make real-world experiences feel dull by comparison. Encouraging outdoor play and social interactions can help prepare your child for an engaging, screen-free camp experience.

### 6. Providing Complete Information

To ensure the best possible camp experience, it's essential that we have **complete and accurate** information about your child's emotional, behavioral, medical, or physical needs. Withholding important details can make it harder for us to provide the right care and support. By sharing this information, you help set your camper up for success, allowing us to create a safe, positive, and accommodating environment. We take confidentiality **very seriously** and have strict measures in place to protect your child's privacy. Our goal is to ensure every camper has a happy and successful time at Camp Howe!

### 7. Send a Positive First-Day Letter

Write a letter in advance or drop one off at check-in. Keep the message upbeat—remind them of the fun they'll have and how proud you are of them for trying something new.

### 8. Avoid Making Promises to Pick Them Up

Telling your child, "If you're unhappy, I'll come get you," can make it harder for them to adjust. Instead, express confidence in their ability to handle new experiences and reassure them that they have support at camp.

### 9. Be Prepared for Homesick Letters

Letters from your child saying they're homesick can be tough to read. Remember, by the time you receive it, they're likely already feeling better. If you're concerned, call camp for an update—we'll be happy to let you know how your child is doing.

## Returning Campers: Adjusting to Change

Even experienced campers may take time to adjust, especially if they have new cabin mates or counselors. Talk to your child about how change can be positive and encourage them to be a buddy to first-time campers. Remind them that they're now the camp experts and can help others feel at home!

### What to Say and What Not to Say

When talking to a child who is nervous about attending camp, it's important to stay positive, confident, and reassuring. Here are some helpful things to say:

#### What to Say:

- "We know how to contact Camp Howe, and they know how to contact me."
- "While you are at camp, we will be at \_\_\_\_\_ and will write to you regularly."
- "I love you! I'm very excited and happy that you are going to Camp Howe."
- "I know you'll love many things about camp."
- "It's okay to miss me. I'll miss you too! But don't miss out on activities because you miss me."
- "It's okay to feel nervous about camp! Everyone feels that way their first time. What is one thing you are looking forward to at camp?"
- "At home, we have only \_\_\_ adult(s) looking after you. At camp, there are almost 50 adults around to make sure you're safe, making friends, and having fun."
- "I can't wait to hear about all your activities and new friends when you get home!"

#### What Not to Say:

Avoid saying things that make it harder for your child to adjust to camp, such as:

- "We can pick you up early if you don't like camp."
- "Just try camp for a few days! If you don't like it, we'll pick you up."
- "I'll give you a cell phone so you can call me anytime."
- "We're going on vacation, so you have to go to camp."

These statements can make a child more anxious or less willing to engage in camp activities. Instead, focus on encouragement and excitement about their upcoming adventure.

## How to Say Goodbye to Your Child on Check In Day

Saying goodbye to your child as they head off to camp is a special and emotional moment for both parents and campers. It's perfectly natural to feel emotional—after all, it shows how much you love and care for them. However, the way you say goodbye can play a big role in helping your child transition to camp life with confidence. Here are a few tips to make the moment easier:

- **Express your love:** Let your child know how much they mean to you. Your reassurance will help boost their self-esteem and confidence as they head off to camp.
- **Be confident and positive:** Show your child that you're excited about their camp experience. If you show hesitation or doubt, they may start to feel unsure too. Keep it upbeat!
- **Practice ahead of time:** If you know it might be hard for you to say goodbye, practice what you want to say with a friend or family member beforehand. It'll make the real moment feel more manageable.
- **Keep it brief:** Long goodbyes can make the transition harder for both you and your camper. If you'd like some extra time together, consider doing something fun before drop-off, like having breakfast, so you can enjoy some quality moments before saying goodbye.



## Check In

We strive to make the check-in process as smooth and efficient as possible for both campers and their families. Here's what you can expect:

### Resident Campers:

- **Arrival Times on Sunday:**
  - **CITs:** 1:30 - 2:15 PM
  - **Teen Campers:** 1:30 - 2:30 PM
  - **Junior Campers:** 2:30 - 3:30 PM
- **Check-In Process:**
  - Upon arrival, a staff member will greet you and provide directions.
  - We utilize a "kiss-and-go" method to minimize stress and homesickness for campers.
  - If all paperwork is complete, campers can say goodbye while staff unloads the car and escorts them to their cabin.
  - If there are any outstanding forms or medications, one family member will escort the child to the designated area. Once everything is in order, the camper will be handed off to a staff member and escorted to the cabin.
- **At the Dining Hall:**
  - Two lines are available for parents or guardians:
    - One for those without medications.
    - One for those with medications. All medications must be in original containers and will be managed by the Health Supervisor. Health forms will be reviewed with the Health Supervisor.
  - A separate line is designated for office matters, including payment, paperwork, and opening a store account. You may also drop off pre-written mail here.
- **At the Entrance to Each Unit:**
  - Campers will undergo a temperature check and a head lice screening. You are welcome to join them here and meet their counselors.

### Day Campers:

- **Check-In:**
  - Day campers can check in on Sunday with resident campers to shorten Monday morning drop-off time.
  - Typically, check-in for Day Camp is Monday at 8:30 AM.

- **Check-In Process:**
  - Similar to resident campers, but all procedures are completed in the Day Camp Parking Lot.
- **On Subsequent Days:**
  - Drop-off is in the parking area, and the child is escorted to their group. Once the check-in process is complete, you are free to leave. While it can be challenging, especially for first-time campers, we recommend discussing your plans with your child beforehand. Linger can sometimes make a child nervous and more apt to start feeling homesick. Campers and staff are eager to start their program, meet cabin mates, and become oriented to camp life. Don't feel slighted if your camper doesn't seem to care that you are taking your departure. That's a sign of an interested, enthusiastic camper.



# Check Out

## *Resident Campers:*

- **Pick-Up Time:** 5:00 - 7:00 PM on Friday. We try to stagger arrival and assign approximate times based alphabetically.
- **Process:**
  - Parents will collect the camper in a drive-through fashion.
  - **First Stop:** With the nurse and office staff to collect medication, leftover store money, and ordered photos.
  - **Identification Check:** ID will be checked before allowing the camper into the car. You will be given a slip with your child's name on it.
  - **Luggage:** Lined up along the road, grouped together by cabin. Staff will assist in loading luggage into cars.
  - Teens will be located in one building, and Juniors in another. We will have your camper ready to greet you and you exchange your slip for your child. We want to make sure the right kids go home with the right adults.
- **Parent Guidelines:**
  - Minimize time for pickup.
  - Know the pick-up password.
  - All Candlelight ceremonies will be performed before parent pick-up this summer with campers only.

## *Day Campers:*

- **Monday through Thursday:**
  - Park in the day camp parking, and your camper will be brought to your car at 5:45 PM.
- **Friday:**
  - Follow the same procedure as resident campers from 5:00 - 7:00 PM.

## **Traffic Management:**

- The road in and out of camp is limited for everyone coming and going simultaneously.
- Staff will direct traffic to make the road one-way only, alternating between entering and exiting.

# Communication

## Mail

Receiving letters or cards from home is a meaningful way for your camper to feel supported and connected. Since mail delivery can take several days, we recommend sending a letter before your camper leaves for camp, or giving it to the Office Staff who will be located at the Dining Hall each Sunday during check-in. This ensures your child receives a letter from home on their first day, helping them feel secure and supported. Monday is our first mail day. **We ask that packages be limited to no more than 1 per child per session and we will deliver them on Tuesdays Only.** Encourage your camper to write back by including a self-addressed, stamped envelope in their luggage.

### Address letters to:

Your Camper, Cabin Number

P.O. Box 326

Goshen, MA 01032

## Visitations

To maintain the flow of camp life and support your child's adjustment to camp, we kindly ask that visits be limited to the opening and closing days of your camper's session. If you would like to visit your child in the middle of a two week session, you may pick them up and take them off property. This helps ensure that campers whose families aren't visiting don't feel homesick. Saturday pick up times are 9am, 12 noon and 5:30

## Telephone Calls

To minimize disruptions and help your child adjust to camp life, campers do not generally make or receive phone calls during their stay. If any issues arise, the Camp Director or staff will contact you. Please remind your child to speak with their counselors if they're feeling unwell or homesick. Emergency messages will always be delivered.

Camp phone lines are needed for camp business, so campers will not have free access to telephones. Please refrain from promising your child they will be able to call home. Such promises can increase homesickness and cause behavioral challenges. If you're looking for a camp with more frequent communication options, you might want to consider day camps or camps where phone use is allowed. For your child's safety and focus, please do not send a cell phone with them.

If you have any concerns or need to reach the Camp Director, please call 413-268-7635.

## Parent Notification

At camp, your child may experience some minor bumps and bruises—just as they might at home. We follow Standing Orders provided by the Camp Physician when administering over-the-counter medications. With parental and physician consent, prescribed medications are administered by the Health Supervisor according to the instructions on the prescription label.

Our medical staff is available on-site to attend to your child’s health needs. Parents will be notified by phone if:

- Your child needs to stay in the infirmary overnight due to illness, as per Standing Orders.
- Your child requires medical attention from their personal physician.
- Your child sustains an injury that requires outside medical attention.
- An injury prevents your child from participating in camp activities for extended periods of time.



# Health and Medical Information

## Required Forms

Camp Howe requires specific medical documentation for all campers to ensure their health and safety during their stay.

### Medical Forms and Physical Examination

- **Health History Form:** Parents or guardians must complete the Health History section in CampDocs within six months before camp.
- **Physical Examination:** A licensed physician must conduct a physical examination within 18 months before the start of camp. This examination must be documented, signed, and dated by the physician.
- **Immunization Records:** A current immunization record is required, detailing all vaccinations received.
- **Medication Authorization:** If your child requires medication during camp, a physician's order is necessary for each medication, along with a signed parental consent form.

These requirements align with Massachusetts state regulations and are essential for camp attendance.

## Medication

All medications, including both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, must be submitted in their original containers and handed directly to the Health Supervisor upon arrival. This ensures that all medications are properly stored and administered under the supervision of our licensed health professionals.

For campers who require inhalers, we request that two inhalers be provided: one to be kept with the camper and another to be stored and controlled by the Health Supervisor. This practice ensures that the camper has immediate access to their medication while maintaining a backup in case of emergencies.

Medication will be administered by certified or approved trained staff.

## Over the Counter Medication

To administer any prescribed or OTC medication not included on our List of Over-the-Counter Medication tab in campdoc, we require written authorization from the camper's physician. Without this documentation, we are unable to administer the medication to the camper. We only stock the OTC medications on our list.

**For liquid medications:** If there is a chewable or pill alternative, please send that instead. Administering liquid medication to a large number of campers can be challenging, and chewable options help ensure timely and accurate dosing.

Medication will be administered by certified or trained approved individuals following the orders set forth by the Camp’s Health Care Consultant or the Childs own Doctor.

## Immunization Requirements

### Grades Kindergarten–6

DTaP/Tdap	<b>5 doses;</b> 4 doses are acceptable if the fourth dose is given on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday; DT is only acceptable with a letter stating a medical contraindication to DTaP
Polio	<b>4 doses;</b> fourth dose must be given on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose or a fifth dose is required; 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	<b>3 doses;</b> laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
MMR	<b>2 doses;</b> first dose must be given on or after the 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday, and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	<b>2 doses;</b> first dose must be given on or after the 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

### Grades 7–12

Tdap	<b>1 dose;</b> and history of DTaP primary series or age-appropriate catch-up vaccination; Tdap given at ≥7 years may be counted, but a dose at age 11–12 is recommended if Tdap was given earlier as part of a catch-up schedule; Td or Tdap should be given if it has been ≥10 years since last Tdap
Polio	<b>4 doses;</b> fourth dose must be given on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose or a fifth dose is required; 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	<b>3 doses;</b> laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable; 2 doses of Heplisav-B given on or after 18 years of age are acceptable
MMR	<b>2 doses;</b> first dose must be given on or after the 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday, and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	<b>2 doses;</b> first dose must be given on or after the 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

MenACWY (formerly MCV4)	<p><b>Grade 7–10: 1 dose;</b> 1 dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) required; Meningococcal B vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement</p> <p><b>Grade 11–12: 2 doses;</b> second dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) must be given on or after the 16th birthday and <math>\geq 8</math> weeks after the previous dose; 1 dose is acceptable if it was given on or after the 16th birthday; Meningococcal B vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement</p>
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**The only exceptions to these requirements are also dictated by the State of Massachusetts.**

- **Religious Exceptions.** If a camper or staff member has religious objections to physical examinations or immunizations, the camper or staff member shall submit a written statement, signed by a parent or legal guardian of the camper, to the effect that the individual is in good health and stating the reason for such objections.
- **Immunization Contraindicated.** Any immunization specified in 105 CMR 430.152 shall not be required if the health history required by 105 CMR 430.151 includes a certification by a physician that he or she has examined the individual and that, in the physician's opinion, the physical condition of the individual is such that his or her health would be endangered by such immunization.

If there any outbreak at camp, campers who are not immunized will be required to leave property

Please reach out to camp to obtain the required form.



## **What we do if your child feels unwell (mildly ill)**

At Camp Howe, we believe that feeling a little under the weather shouldn't mean missing out on all the fun. While our goal is to keep every camper healthy and active, we know that sometimes kids just don't feel their best. When that happens, here are the steps we take to ensure they're cared for, comfortable, and able to return to camp life as soon as they're ready:

### **1. Initial Assessment by Staff**

Staff members will check in with the camper, asking how they're feeling and noting any visible symptoms. This helps determine if a visit to the Health Care Supervisor (HCS) is needed.

### **2. Escort to Health Care Supervisor (HCS)**

If warranted, the camper is brought to the HCS for a more thorough evaluation.

### **3. Evaluation by HCS**

The Health Care Supervisor reviews the camper's symptoms, checks temperature, hydration, and other vitals, and documents everything in the health log.

### **4. Basic Treatment and Rest**

Campers may receive water, a cool-down break, over-the-counter remedies (with prior parent permission), or a supervised rest period in the health center.

### **5. Monitor and Reassess**

The HCS keeps an eye on the camper's progress. If symptoms improve, the camper is cleared to rejoin activities.

### **6. Follow-Up Communication**

Camp staff are informed of any special care instructions. Parents or guardians will be contacted if symptoms persist, worsen, or if the camper spends extended time out of regular activities.

**For campers with ongoing illness, we will contact the family to discuss the potential of going home.**

**For serious or emergency situations 911 will be called. On staff we have trained and certified staff that will work with the campers until EMS arrives. If we have a need to call 911, we will contact the camper family immediately.**

# Packing

## Luggage and Packing

Please pack only the essentials, as space in the cabins is limited. Label all personal items and luggage to prevent mix-ups. Avoid bringing valuables, large amounts of money, dangerous items, or pets. For safety reasons, please do not send any nut or peanut butter items, as we have campers with allergies. Food should be placed in the cabin food bin and shared with cabin mates. Remember, Camp Howe cannot be held responsible for loss, damage, or theft of personal property or clothing.

## Laundry

We recommend bringing enough clean clothes, towels, washcloths, and swimsuits to last the entire session. Include a laundry bag for soiled items; campers can rinse out some things and hang them on the line. Please note that Camp Howe does not provide laundry facilities for campers.

## Lost and Found

To minimize the chance of losing belongings, label all clothing and personal items. Avoid sending valuable or new items. Before leaving camp, double-check your camper's belongings and inform staff if something is missing. While we are not responsible for lost items, contacting us promptly may help locate them. Lost and found items are kept for one month; after that, they are donated to a local charity.

## Eye Care

Ensuring your child has the necessary eyewear is essential for their comfort and safety at camp. If your child wears glasses, please consider sending a second pair to accommodate for potential loss or damage. This precaution helps prevent any discomfort or inconvenience during their camp experience. We also recommend considering affordable options like Zenni Optical, where you can find quality glasses at budget-friendly prices.

For campers who use contact lenses, it's advisable to send them with extra lenses and the appropriate cleaning solution. This ensures they have the necessary supplies to maintain their eye health throughout their stay.

## **Clothing**

- Sleeping apparel (pajamas, sweat suit, or oversize t-shirt)
- Daily change of socks and underwear (plus a few extras)
- Shirts (both short and long-sleeved - mornings can be chilly some days)
- Hoodies or sweaters
- Shorts
- Jeans or long pants
- Wet weather gear (Raincoat or poncho, rain hat, and footwear)

## **Footwear**

- Sturdy footwear. Shoes and/or sneakers are a must for most activities
- Sandals MUST be closed-toe for Safety Reasons.
- One pair of wet shoes (old sneakers for boating or swimming may get ruined)

## **Swim gear**

- Swimsuit (appropriate for being active swimming, paddle boarding, etc )
- Beach towel

## **Bathing**

- Soap
- Shampoo
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Hair brush or comb
- 2 Towels and washcloths
- Shower Shoes (shoes or flip-flops to wear in the shower)

## **Bedding**

- Sheet
- Blankets or Sleeping Bag
- Pillow and extra case

## **Gear**

- Trunk or duffle for storage
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Water bottle with strap
- Day Pack (backpack)

## **Other Items**

- Sun-block lotion SPF-30or higher
- Insect Repellent
- Sun hat and bandana

## **Optional Items**

- Camera

- ❑ Dress up clothes for the dance that match the theme of the week at the camps but every could be eg "Gorilla" day if that is your child's favorite outfit
- ❑ Laundry Bag with name on it. (mesh bags are good for airflow)
- ❑ Stationery and writing supplies
- ❑ Books or magazines for quiet reading



### What not to bring

- ❑ NO CELL PHONES.
- ❑ No knives, firearms, or weapons of any type may be brought to Camp.
- ❑ Camp Howe provides all equipment for activities, so it is not necessary to bring anything for sports or other activities.
- ❑ Jewelry, such as gold chains or bracelets, and other valuable items should not be brought to camp or worn.
- ❑ Alcohol is never permitted at Camp Howe.
- ❑ Only those medications authorized by a parent and physician can be administered by the Camp Nurse are allowed. No drugs are allowed.
- ❑ Animals may not be brought to the Camp without permission from a director.
- ❑ Campers are not to bring motor vehicles or motorized devices.
- ❑ Electronic devices, including radios, tape recorders, and hand-held games, are only used during siesta and bedtimes. If items are used at other times and interfere with the program, the staff may confiscate them. Camp Howe is not responsible if the electronic devices are lost, stolen, or damaged.

## Additional Day Camp Information

### First Check-In for the week.

Monday 8.30 – 9.00am

Plan to spend a brief time at camp checking your camper in with the office and nurse.

**Drop Off Times** 8.30 – 9.00am

**Pick Up Times** 5.45pm

Friday check out will be between 5 and 7 with the resident campers leaving. Please bring your ID as this is a different process than the other days of the week or remember your check out password.

Lunch is provided each day in the dining hall.

- Each Camper should bring with them each day
- Bag to carry their belongings
- Bathing suit
- Towel
- Water bottle
- Bug Spray and Sun Screen
- And be wearing weather appropriate clothing AND closed in shoes.
- Usually an extra set of clothes is useful also.



# Junior and Day Schedule

Junior campers spend most of their day with their cabin groups, which are organized by age. Each cabin has about 10 campers and 2 or 3 staff.

Some activities are led by activity specialists at the farm, ropes course, waterfront, arts&crafts, and nature programs.

For these activities the cabin counselors help out with group management and support the activity leader.

Everyone has a rest hour and some free swim time each afternoon.

A couple times a week, all the junior cabins come together for a choice block, where campers can choose between a few different options.

Other activities are planned and led by the cabin counselors. These can be anything you're excited about and want to do with your campers!

Most nights, the whole camp comes together for an activity organized by the Program Director.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Themes						
7:00		<b>Early Morning Interest Groups</b> - some campers choose to get up early for options like running, polar bear plunge/fishing, morning farm feed, and jam session, which are led by counselors on a rotating schedule.				
7:45		<b>Flag</b> - everyone at camp meets at the flagpoles to raise flags representing the states and countries our staff come from, give shoutouts to members of our community, and share announcements for the day.				
8:00		Breakfast				
8:45 - 9:00		<b>CIAs</b> - each cabin has a different chore around camp each day. Sweep the dining hall, clean the unit bathrooms, pick up trash around camp, etc.				
9:00 - 10:20		<b>5 Days</b> (meet at flag) - on Sunday, campers choose their top choices for an activity to do all week long. Five day groups are a mix of juniors, teens, and CITs, and can be led by any staff member. Five days can be things like archery, dungeons & dragons, mapmaking, boating, outdoor cooking, wilderness survival, mural making... whatever you can imagine and want to teach to campers!				
10:30 - 10:30		Transition (clean up, change, head to next activity)				
10:30 - 11:50	Staff Meeting	<b>Archery</b> (led by cabin counselor who trained in archery)	<b>Climbing Wall</b> (led by adventure specialists)	<b>Geocaching in the DAR</b> (led by counselors)	<b>Paddleboarding</b> (led by cabin counselors with a lifeguard)	<b>Pollinator Garden Planting</b> (led by nature specialist)
11:50 - 12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:00		<b>Siesta</b> - time to relax in the cabin or set up some hammocks, visit the camp store, pick up mail from the office, shower, prepare for the afternoon				
12:45		<b>Junior Free Swim</b> - lifeguards on duty, cabin counselors swimming with campers or playing games/taking hanging out with those who choose to stay on the beach				
2:00 - 3:05	Check In CITs 12:45-1:30 Teens 1:30-2:30 Juniors 2:30-3:30					
3:05 - 3:15	Transition (clean up, change, head to next activity)					
3:15 - 4:20	Once all your campers arrive, head out on a tour of camp, do some icebreaker games, and make a community contract!	<b>Low Ropes</b> (led by low ropes specialists)	<b>Junior Choice Block:</b> options led by cabin counselors or specialists, all juniors choose between the options 1. Archery 2. Water Baseball 3. Tie Dye	<b>High Ropes</b> (led by adventure specialists)	<b>Junior Choice Block:</b> options led by cabin counselors or specialists, all juniors choose between the options 1. Farm 2. Chalkout (basketball and chalk drawing) 3. Hike with Billy	Ceremony - meet at flag @ 3:00
4:20 - 4:30		Transition (clean up, change, head to next activity)				
4:30 - 5:35	<b>Life Size Hungry Hungry Hippos</b> (led by cabin counselors)	<b>Arts and Crafts</b> (led by art specialist)	<b>Farm</b> (led by farm specialist)	<b>Fairy House Building</b> (led by cabin counselors)		Dinner @ 4:30
5:40		Singing Hill				
5:45		Dinner				
6:30		Flag				
6:45-8:15	<b>Cabin Night</b> - sunset painting at the DARI stargazing on the rec field! evening swim with one of the lifeguards! really any type of cabin bonding activity you can dream of!	<b>Opening Campfire</b> (each cabin performs a skit or song)	<b>Dance</b>	<b>All Camp</b> (a game or scavenger hunt or carnival-style activity that all cabins do together!)	<b>Talent Show</b> (each cabin gets a few acts to sign up for)	
8:15		Lights Out Circle - Juniors Start Bedtime Routine				
8:30		Bedtime! Showers, toothbrushing, cabin chat, winding down with music or a story!				
10:00		Teen Bedtime				
11:00	All Camp Lights Out - Everyone in Cabins	Optional Junior Hammock Sleep Out - led by a member of leadership, with a few cabin counselors joining				

# Teen Schedule

Themes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:00					<b>Optional Sunrise Hike to the Firetower</b> - Some campers choose to get up extra early to walk about 2 miles to a firetower in the state forest for a beautiful view of the sunrise!	
7:45						
8:00						
8:45 - 9:00				<b>Breakfast</b>		
9:00 - 10:20						
10:20 - 10:30						
10:30 - 11:50						
11:50 - 12:00						
12:00						
12:45						
2:00 - 3:05						
3:05 - 3:15						
3:15 - 4:20						
4:20 - 4:30						
4:30 - 5:35						
5:40						
5:45						
6:30						
6:45-8:15						
8:15						
8:30						
10:00						
11:00						

Themes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:00						
7:45						
8:00						
8:45 - 9:00						
9:00 - 10:20						
10:20 - 10:30						
10:30 - 11:50						
11:50 - 12:00						
12:00						
12:45						
2:00 - 3:05						
3:05 - 3:15						
3:15 - 4:20						
4:20 - 4:30						
4:30 - 5:35						
5:40						
5:45						
6:30						
6:45-8:15						
8:15						
8:30						
10:00						
11:00						

Teen campers get more choice in their activities, and spend less time with just their cabin group. Each activity block, all teens gather and choose between 4-5 different activity options.

Some of the options are led by program specialists, but the majority are planned and led by teen cabin counselors.

Everyone has a rest hour and some free swim time each afternoon.

We aim for a balance of high and low energy activities in each block.

After juniors head to bed, the teens do one more activity all together before getting ready for bed.

Themes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:00						
7:45						
8:00						
8:45 - 9:00						
9:00 - 10:20						
10:20 - 10:30						
10:30 - 11:50						
11:50 - 12:00						
12:00						
12:45						
2:00 - 3:05						
3:05 - 3:15						
3:15 - 4:20						
4:20 - 4:30						
4:30 - 5:35						
5:40						
5:45						
6:30						
6:45-8:15						
8:15						
8:30						
10:00						
11:00						

# Camp Howe Code of Conduct

At Camp Howe, we strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where every camper feels valued and respected. To ensure a positive experience for all, we ask that campers and their families review and adhere to the following guidelines:

## Respect and Inclusivity

- **Treat Everyone Kindly:** Show kindness and respect to fellow campers, staff, and the environment. Embrace differences and celebrate diversity.
- **Use Positive Language:** Communicate with words that uplift and encourage. Avoid using offensive or hurtful language.
- **Be a Good Listener:** Pay attention when others speak and value their opinions. You may disagree but you must be respectful.

## Bullying and Harassment

- **Respectful Behavior is Expected:** Bullying, harassment, or any form of intimidation is strictly prohibited. This includes unwanted, aggressive behavior that is repeated and involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
- **Speak Up:** If you witness or experience bullying or harassment, report it to a staff member immediately.

## Safety and Well-being

- **Look Out for Each Other:** Ensure your actions do not endanger yourself or others.
- **Stay Within Boundaries:** Remain with your assigned group and follow staff instructions and do not enter other cabins without permission.
- **Respect Personal Space:** Ask to enter other's personal space.

## Self-Harm and Mental Health

- **Seek Support:** If you're feeling overwhelmed or struggling, talk to a counselor or trusted staff member. Your well-being is our priority.
- **Look Out for Friends:** If you notice a friend in distress, encourage them to seek help and inform a staff member.

## Personal Conduct

- **Appropriate Language and Behavior:** Use language that is respectful and free from profanity or offensive terms. Engage in actions that reflect positively on yourself and the camp community.
- **Dress Code:** Wear attire suitable for camp activities, such as sneakers for sports and appropriate swimwear for aquatic activities. Clothing displaying lewd, suggestive, or hateful messages, or references to alcohol or drugs, is not permitted.

## Digital Conduct

- **Online Behavior outside of camp,** please represent our community positively. Do not use digital platforms to harass, bully, or intimidate others. Engage in respectful and uplifting communication year-round.

## Consequences for Misconduct

While we aim to guide and support all campers, repeated or serious violations of these guidelines may result in:

- A discussion with the camper and/or their parents.
- Loss of certain privileges.
- Early dismissal from camp without a refund.
- Not being able to return the following summer.

We believe in the potential of every camper and are committed to working together to ensure a safe and enjoyable camp experience for all.



## Directions

### Camp Howe, East Street Goshen MA 01032

Goshen can be found in the center of western Massachusetts on Route 9 between Northampton and Pittsfield.

#### Arriving From the North or Northeast:

Take Rt. 2 West from I-91 in Greenfield. At Shelburne Falls follow signs to Rt. 112 South almost 12 miles to Goshen, turn left on Rt. 9 East. In the center of Goshen (church on the right) turn left onto East Street. There is a large sign on the corner pointing to Camp Howe. Go half a mile to the DAR State Forest Headquarters and Goshen Police station (brown buildings on the left). Turn left behind the police station and follow the dirt road half a mile into camp.

#### From the South or Southeast:

Take I-91 North to exit 25, Northampton. At the bottom of the exit ramp go straight through the light and continue straight through two more lights. At the rotary, turn right on Rt. 9 West and continue almost 10 miles through Williamsburg to Goshen. In the center of Goshen (post office and church on the left) turn right onto East Street. There is a large sign on the corner pointing to Camp Howe. Go half a mile to the DAR State Forest Headquarters and Goshen Police station (brown buildings on the left). Turn left behind the police station and follow the dirt road half a mile into camp.

#### From West:

Follow Rt. 20 and 7 from the Mass Pike to Pittsfield, MA. In Pittsfield, follow Route 9 East through Dalton, over Windsor Mountain, through Cummington to Goshen. . In the center of Goshen (church on the right) turn left onto East Street. There is a large sign on the corner pointing to Camp Howe. Go half a mile to the DAR State Forest Headquarters and Goshen Police station (brown buildings on the left). Turn left behind the police station and follow the dirt road half a mile into camp.



# Accreditation and Licensing

## Accreditation

Camp Howe is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA), which assures you that our camp meets or exceeds nationally recognized standards for staffing, programming, health and wellness, and food service. Our commitment to ACA accreditation means that we undergo regular, independent assessments that go above and beyond the state regulations, ensuring we provide the best possible experience for your child.

## Licensing

Camp Howe is fully licensed by the Goshen Board of Health and adheres to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s regulations, including 105 CMR 430.00 Minimum Standards for Recreational Camps for Children. Parents have the right to request information regarding background checks, health care practices, discipline policies, and procedures for filing grievances, as outlined by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

## Required Information from the Department of Public Health to Share

Mosquitos

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/protect-yourself-from-mosquitoes/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/protect-children-from-mosquito-bites/download>

*Parents have the right to request to review background check, health care, discipline policies and grievance procedures upon request.*



**Meningococcal Disease and Camp Attendees: Commonly Asked Questions** *The State of Massachusetts Department of Public Health Requires that we send this information to you.*

**What is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is caused by infection with bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These bacteria can infect the tissue (the “meninges”) surrounding the brain and spinal cord and cause meningitis, or they may infect the blood or other organs of the body. Symptoms of meningococcal disease may appear suddenly. Fever, severe and constant headaches, stiff neck or neck pain, nausea and vomiting, and rash can all be signs of meningococcal disease. Changes in behavior, such as confusion, sleepiness, and trouble waking up, can also be important symptoms. In the US, about 350-550 people get meningococcal disease yearly, and 10-15% die despite receiving antibiotic treatment. Of those who survive, about 10-20% may lose limbs, become hard of hearing or deaf, have problems with their nervous system, including long-term neurological problems, or have seizures or strokes. Less common presentations include pneumonia and arthritis.

**How common is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is becoming much less common. Over the past 20 years, the overall incidence of meningococcal disease in the US has declined ten-fold. Twenty years ago in Massachusetts, there were 80-100 cases of meningococcal disease per year. In contrast, for the past decade, the average is approximately 12 cases per year. Declining rates of meningococcal disease may be due in part to the introduction of meningococcal vaccines (initially recommended routinely in 2005 for adolescents aged 11-12 years, unvaccinated college freshmen living in residence halls) as well as other factors such as the decline in cigarette smoking, which may impact susceptibility to this disease.

**How is meningococcal disease spread?**

These bacteria are passed from person to person through saliva (spit). You must be in close contact with an infected person’s saliva for the bacteria to spread. Close contact includes activities such as kissing, sharing water bottles, sharing eating/drinking utensils, sharing cigarettes, or being within 3-6 feet of someone who is infected and coughing and sneezing.

**Who is most at risk for getting meningococcal disease?**

People who travel to certain parts of the world where the disease is very common, microbiologists, people with HIV infection, and those exposed to meningococcal disease during an outbreak are at risk for meningococcal disease. Children and adults with damaged or removed spleens or persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder) are at risk. Adolescents and people who live in specific settings, such as college freshmen living in dormitories and military recruits, are at greater risk of disease from some of the serotypes.

**Are camp attendees at increased risk for meningococcal disease?**

Children attending day or residential camps are not considered to be at an increased risk for meningococcal disease because of their participation.

**Is there a vaccine against meningococcal disease?**

Yes, there are multiple meningococcal vaccines. Quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menveo and MenQuadfi) protects against 4 serotypes (A, C, W, and Y) of meningococcal disease. The meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) protects against serogroup B meningococcal disease for people aged 10 and older. Pentavalent meningococcal vaccine protects against serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y. It may be administered to persons aged ≥10 years when both a quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine and meningococcal B vaccine are indicated at the same visit.

**Should my child or adolescent receive the meningococcal vaccine?**

Different meningococcal vaccines are recommended for a range of age and risk groups. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) is routinely recommended at age 11-12 years with a booster at age 16 and is required for school entry for grades 7 and 11. In addition, these vaccines may be recommended for additional children with certain high-risk health conditions, such as those described above.

Meningococcal serogroup B vaccine (Bexsero and Trumenba) is recommended for people with certain relatively rare high-risk health conditions (examples: persons with a damaged spleen or whose spleen has been removed, those with persistent complement component deficiency (an inherited disorder), and people who may have been exposed during an

outbreak). Adolescents and young adults (16 through 23 years of age) who do not have high-risk conditions may be vaccinated with a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, preferably at 16 through 18 years of age, to provide short-term protection for most strains of serogroup B meningococcal disease. Parents of adolescents and children at higher risk of infection because of certain medical conditions or other circumstances should discuss vaccination with their child's healthcare provider.

### **How can I protect my child or adolescent from getting meningococcal disease?**

The best protection against meningococcal disease and many other infectious diseases is thorough and frequent handwashing, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette. Individuals should:

- 1) wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food (hands should be washed with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand gel or rub may be used if hands are not visibly dirty).
- 2) cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard the tissue in a trash can; or if they don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve.
- 3) not share food, drinks, or eating utensils with other people, especially if they are ill.
- 4) contact their healthcare provider immediately if they have symptoms of meningococcal disease.

If your child is exposed to someone with meningococcal disease, antibiotics may be recommended to keep your child from getting sick.

You can obtain more information about meningococcal disease or vaccination from your healthcare provider, your local Board of Health (listed in the phone book under government), or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Divisions of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations>.

For additional information on *Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)*, please visit the CDC's website: [Meningococcal Disease Surveillance and Trends | Meningococcal | CDC](#).

Provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in accordance with M.G.L. c.111, s.219 and 105 CMR 430.157(C). Reviewed September 2024 Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Divisions of Epidemiology, and Immunization

